

RUBEN GALLEG0

3RD DISTRICT, ARIZONA

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES

SUBCOMMITTEES:
RANKING MEMBER, INTELLIGENCE
AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS
TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES

NATURAL RESOURCES

SUBCOMMITTEES:
INDIAN AND INSULAR AFFAIRS
WATER, WILDLIFE, AND FISHERIES
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0307

DC OFFICE:

1114 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4065

DISTRICT OFFICE:

1601 N 7TH STREET
SUITE 310
PHOENIX, AZ 85006-2481
(602) 256-0551

February 13, 2023

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Austin,

I am writing to express my grave concern regarding the four recent shoot-downs of high-altitude objects directly over or in the immediate vicinity of United States territory or territorial waters and to request a classified briefing on the matter.

As you know, the United States has shot down four high-altitude objects over the last ten days. On February 4th, an F-22 Raptor shot down a Chinese surveillance balloon off the coast of South Carolina that, according to your statement the same day, was “being used by the PRC [People’s Republic of China] in an attempt to surveil strategic sites in the continental United States.” I applaud the Administration’s decision to down the balloon, taking decisive action as soon as the mission could be accomplished safely and at a location that will allow us to recover and potentially exploit its intelligence gathering systems.

Since then, three unidentified, high-altitude objects have been shot down: on February 10th off the coast of Alaska; on February 11th over Canadian territory; and on February 12th over Lake Huron. All three objects posed a threat to civilian aviation and were recommended to be shot down by military leadership, whose advice President Biden acted on.

As Ranking Member of the Armed Services Committee’s Intelligence and Special Operations subcommittee, I am deeply concerned by continued incidents of high-altitude objects violating United States airspace. That is why I secured language in the Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act to comprehensively evaluate Unmanned Aerial Phenomena (UAP), allowing the Defense Department to collect information in an organized manner for analysis and further study. That is also why, under my Chairmanship of the Subcommittee in the 117th Congress, I held the first hearing on UAP.

It is imperative that we give this issue the time and attention it deserves. Therefore, I request a classified briefing by your department to provide Congress with further details on the four high-altitude objects. We must identify any potential breakdown that put us in a position

RUBEN GALLEGO

3RD DISTRICT, ARIZONA

COMMITTEES:

ARMED SERVICES

SUBCOMMITTEES:

RANKING MEMBER, INTELLIGENCE
AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS
TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES

NATURAL RESOURCES

SUBCOMMITTEES:

INDIAN AND INSULAR AFFAIRS
WATER, WILDLIFE, AND FISHERIES
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0307

DC OFFICE:

1114 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4065

DISTRICT OFFICE:

1601 N 7TH STREET
SUITE 310
PHOENIX, AZ 85006-2481
(602) 256-0551

where we missed these high-altitude objects in the past and ensure that we do not miss them in the future.

Thank you for your attention to this crucial matter and I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Ruben Gallego
MEMBER OF CONGRESS